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## IMCC - TASK ORDER DEVELOPMENT & AWARD

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### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the United States Department of Energy-Environmental Management Headquarters (DOE-HQ), other DOE-EM facilities, and other DOE-EM End-State Contracts with best practices and lessons learned related to the solicitation and award processes of an End-State Contract Task Order. The feedback included in this document is related to the development and award of ten (10) Integrated Mission Completion Contract (IMCC) Task Orders (TOs). The goal is for existing and future End-State solicitations/awards to learn from and expand on the success of IMCC as it relates to the TO award process.

This document will include a background of IMCC and how the United States Department of Energy Savannah River Site (DOE-SR) and Savannah River Mission Completion, LLC (SRMC) partnered to successfully implement ten (10) TOs. This document also includes best practices and lessons learned that were experienced during the TO solicitation and award processes. This document will discuss these best practices and lessons learned in three (3) phases which include Pre-Solicitation Planning and Partnering; Proposal Development; and Proposal Review, Negotiations, and TO Award.

### IMCC Introduction

IMCC, an End-State Contract, was awarded as a Master Indefinite Quantity-Indefinite Delivery (MIDIQ) contract with an ordering period of up to fifteen (15) years. The purpose of IMCC is to reduce DOE-EM financial and environmental liability at Savannah River Site (SRS) to promote accelerated closure and completion of the SRS Liquid Waste (LW) mission.

The DOE-SR and SRMC have worked in close cooperation to definitize ten (10) Base Period TOs with the potential of two (2) Option Period TOs, that will focus the execution of the IMCC MIDIQ contract over the next ten to fifteen years shown in **Attachment A - SRMC 10-Year Task Order Schedule** and **Attachment B - SRMC 5-Year Option Period Task Order Schedule**.

The largest contributor to successful TO definitization has been the partnering and open communication (to the extent possible) between DOE-SR and SRMC. This strong partnership has helped facilitate alignment and efficiencies through all phases of the TO awards. This document will highlight the best practices that facilitated successful definitization of the ten TOs and discuss the lesson's learned that could be applied on the development of future IMCC TOs or TOs at other DOE-EM facilities.

### Pre-Solicitation Planning and Partnering

The Pre-Solicitation Planning and Partnering phase of the TO award process sets the foundation for a successful definitization of a Task Order. During this phase, DOE-SR and SRMC partnered together closely and conducted multiple meetings to reach alignment of the contract type, the development process, development schedule, and scope for the proposed TO. Alignment of contract type, TO development process, and scope was key in facilitating more efficient proposal development and subsequent reviews following submittal of the proposal. After conducting this process for ten (10) TOs, DOE-SR and SRMC have developed a list of best practices and lessons learned which are detailed below:

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## Best Practices and Lessons Learned:

1. Conduct DOE/Contractor partnering sessions as early and often as possible. Alignment of TO expectations, contract types, TO development processes, schedules, and scope is the key to achieving timely TO definitization.
2. Start the Pre-Solicitation Planning and Partnering as early as possible. DOE-SR and SRMC began discussions on strategy several months before a Request To Propose (RTP) was issued and it was still a challenge to meet the RTP and proposal development schedule. Early alignment on scopes and processes can allow both DOE and the Contractor to begin proposal pre-planning activities well in advance of the RTP.
3. Communicate the Contractor's TO Proposal format to DOE and address format questions and comments prior to preparing the proposal.
4. Use lessons learned from prior TOs to promote continuous improvement of TO development and review process.
5. Identify key resources for proposal development, reviews, negotiations, and final approvals as early as possible.
  - a. Proposal Development: Develop a project team table that identifies all necessary resources to complete successful development of proposal. Share this team table with the applicable resources and DOE counterparts as early as possible.
  - b. Proposal Reviews: Identify resources for internal Contractor reviews, third-party Contractor reviews, DOE local reviews, and DOE-HQ reviews as early as possible. For example, the third-party Contract reviews involved Contractor corporate resources which necessitated additional procurement and schedule alignment steps. Addressing these issues as early as possible can help avoid proposal review delays.
  - c. Proposal Negotiations: Identify Contractor and DOE resources that will be conducting TO negotiations and can provide the most value in the negotiations. One of the keys to a successful negotiation process was ensuring that the correct resources were in the room or readily available during negotiation sessions for both DOE and SRMC. DOE and SRMC limited the discussions to key decision makers and requested supplemental information from Subject Matter Experts on an as-needed basis. This allowed a more focused and organized discussion which led to efficient and successful negotiations.
  - d. Final Approvals: Approvals for both Contractor and DOE involve many approvals. Identifying all required approvals during the planning phase helps promote an efficient final approval process and allows the approvers to be notified well in advance of the needed date.
6. Develop a TO development and definitization schedule and communicate to all stakeholders as early as possible. The TO development and definitization schedule was developed and reviewed at the DOE-SR/SRMC Plan of the Week (POW) meeting. Providing advance notice to key stakeholders of their involvement allows resources to plan and prepare for their tasks well in advance of the need date. The DOE-HQ activities are particularly critical to schedule in advance as these resources are supporting many sites and

may have scheduling conflicts that could impact the TO development and definitization schedule.

## Proposal Development

Following receipt of the RTP, SRMC begins the development of the TO proposal using its documented guides, processes, and procedures. These guides, processes, and procedures were shared with DOE-SR during on-going partnering sessions to align expectations between SRMC and DOE-SR. Minor adjustments were made during TO development to ensure SRMC's proposals met DOE-SR's expectations and allowed for an efficient review and approval process. Similar to the Pre-Solicitation Planning and Partnering, the key to successful proposal development is frequent and open discussion between the Contractor and DOE customer. While SRMC developed their proposal, DOE-SR performed an independent government cost estimate (IGCE) of the scope contained in the TO RTP that was informed by partnering clarifications mentioned above. This independent cost estimate is used as a benchmark to measure SRMC's proposed costs against DOE-SR's expected costs.

This document focuses more on the joint DOE-SR/SRMC best practices and lessons learned that were realized during the successful development of the ten (10) TO Proposals. The best practices and lessons learned are detailed below:

1. Continue DOE/Contractor partnering sessions as often as possible. Alignment of TO expectations, contract types, TO development processes, schedules, and scope is the key to achieving timely TO definitization.
2. Develop a clear and concise document that details the expectations of each TO proposal to ensure alignment between Contractor, local DOE, and DOE-HQ. SRMC used "white-papers" and conducted multiple partnering meetings with DOE-SR to ensure both parties were aligned on the proposal expectations. Topics in the TO expectations white paper included:
  - a. Level of detail for Primavera P6 Resource-Loaded Schedule – Not all projects and sites are the same so tailoring the level of detail to a specific project promotes an efficient proposal development and review process.
  - b. WBS Structure – Contractor and DOE customer alignment of the WBS Structure allows DOE to begin independent cost estimates as early as possible which promotes a more efficient review process. Understanding on Control Account Numbers, titles, and brief description of the scopes allows a more direct comparison between the proposal and the IGCE.
  - c. Thresholds for providing detailed non-labor backup within the proposal – Large TOs require significant cost estimating and non-labor backup files which create tremendous burden on both the Contractor (development) and DOE customer (review). SRMC and DOE-SR worked together to define thresholds for which non-labor items required detailed backup in the official proposals. All non-labor backup was saved on SRMC file servers and were made available upon request, but significant efficiencies were realized by reducing the number of backup files that were formally transmitted as part of the proposal.

- d. Advance discussions and agreement on items such as escalation and other bounding assumptions allows for a more direct comparison of differences between the proposal and the IGCE.
    - e. A definitive schedule of activities was jointly developed and agreed to by both DOE-SR and SRMC to guide key milestones to achieve award of both proposals on time.
3. Develop the TO proposal structure as early as possible to ensure Contract compliance. To the extent possible, use previously developed proposal structures that are familiar to DOE reviewers. SRMC used its proven proposal structure that has been used for many past FAR-based proposals. This ensured that DOE-SR was familiar with the structure which promoted a more efficient review process.
4. Conduct a TO proposal kick-off meeting to allow senior management sponsors to communicate their expectations to ensure proposal development success. SRMC senior management provided an opening statement to all proposal development contributors and this message successfully set the tone and expectations for a successful proposal. Many of the proposal contributors are managing facilities and other projects that take all of their time; however, it was clearly communicated that they would also be supporting the TO proposals to ensure success. This alignment of expectations led to a cohesive proposal development team which allowed SRMC to successfully submit a high-quality proposal on time.
5. Conduct weekly TO proposal development meetings to ensure alignment of expectations amongst the development team. These meetings can be used to communicate many topics including, but not limited to:
  - a. TO proposal development schedule and status
  - b. Upcoming deliverables
  - c. Changes to TO proposal expectations
  - d. Key issues and action items
  - e. General coordination amongst the proposal development team
6. Schedule internal reviews of the proposal as early and often as possible. SRMC uses multiple formal proposal draft milestones to allow reviewers several opportunities to provide comments during proposal development. These multiple reviews ensure that all contributors and stakeholders are engaged throughout proposal development.
7. For larger TOs, conduct “Red-Team” and “Green-Team” reviews that are commonly used for large commercial and DOE prime contract proposals. The “Red-Team” conducts a detailed review of the technical approach, assumptions, and scoping documents. The “Green-Team” conducts a detail review of cost, schedule, basis of estimate, and fee structure. For SRMC, these reviews were performed by personnel from each of the parent companies that had limited prior knowledge of the proposal details. This created an opportunity for a fully independent review by each team. This independent review provided SRMC with comments that may not typically be provided during internal reviews. These comments significantly improved the TO proposal quality prior to submittal to DOE.
8. Ensure senior management reviews and input are requested as early as possible. Late shifts in strategies could create significant changes throughout the proposal documents. Recovery

from these shifts can be very burdensome and time consuming for proposal development teams. This best practice was provided anecdotally as SRMC did not experience any issues with late strategy changes.

### **Proposal Review, Negotiations, and TO Award**

Following submittal of the TO proposal, conduct a proposal de-brief meeting with DOE-SR and SRMC personnel present. This allows the SRMC an opportunity to communicate the contents of the proposal and creates an open environment for questions and answers of the proposal content.

Following submittal of the TO proposal, DOE-SR and SRMC begins the review, negotiations, and TO Award phase. During this phase, DOE-SR performs a technical evaluation of SRMC's submitted proposal. During this review period, SRMC technical and project controls SMEs are made available for any questions needed to complete the review. Meetings are scheduled for each technical area where the DOE-SR personnel may ask questions to support their technical and financial understanding of the proposal. Once the technical evaluation is complete, DOE-SR submits a pre-negotiation memorandum to DOE-HQ which, when approved, allows DOE-SR and SRMC to formally begin negotiations. DOE-SR and SRMC negotiate the TOs using an organized, in-person approach. First, the technical assumptions and estimated costs are negotiated and then the fee is negotiated. These are done in separate sessions. Separating these topics into two distinct discussions allows DOE-SR and SRMC to negotiate in a focused environment leading to a more efficient negotiation process. Once the TO proposal is negotiated, DOE-SR provides a post-negotiation memorandum to DOE-HQ which, once approved, allows DOE-SR to award the TO. After conducting this process for ten (10) TOs, DOE-SR and SRMC have developed a list of best practices and lessons learned which are detailed below:

#### **Proposal Review**

1. Ensure Contractor SMEs and proposal development team are readily available for technical and financial clarification questions.
2. Conduct DOE and Contractor in-person meetings to promote technical and financial clarification questions. For larger proposals, DOE-SR and SRMC conducted separate meetings for each major facility, which allowed reviewers the opportunity to ask detailed and focused questions without distraction from other scopes.
3. Shortly after submittal of the proposal, SRMC conducts a proposal briefing with DOE-SR and DOE-HQ reviewers. This provides an overall view of the proposal, allows reviewers to ask questions, and provides a better understanding of the proposal.
4. DOE establishes a TEAMS channel between DOE-SR and DOE-HQ to house the Pre-Negotiation Memo documentation that requires DOE-HQ review and approval. In this channel, all reviewers have the ability to provide comments within one document. This allows for quicker comment resolution.
5. Real-time Business Clearance Review is done on the Pre-Negotiation documentation which provides for same-day or next-day DOE-HQ approval.
6. A more uniform/standardized approach to labor (direct and subcontracted) task analysis backup documentation (format/content/level of detail) would assist in understanding differences in labor hours and resource types.

7. Showing the labor fringe without escalation related to the direct labor (also without escalation) in cost detail tables and supporting flat files will eliminate confusion and aid in the proposal review process.
8. Identifying the SRMC CAS Board Disclosure Statement as an “available on request” document rather than including it in the proposal will noticeably reduce the page count without any material effect on the quality of the proposal. There may be other items in the Supporting Financial Data section that could be treated similarly to further reduce the page count.

### **Proposal Negotiations**

1. Approach negotiations with the mindset that both parties (DOE and Contractor) will benefit on the path forward. DOE-SR and SRMC’s overall goal is to achieve mission completion so that served as the overall goal for all decisions made.
2. Conduct partnering meetings in advance of negotiations to allow DOE and Contractor an arena to share their needs and desires related to the upcoming negotiation. Understanding each other’s position as early as possible promotes a highly productive negotiation and promotes a partnering atmosphere rather than a combative atmosphere. It also allows each party to divulge any external factors or stakeholders that may impact decision making during negotiation.
3. Develop a negotiation strategy and communicate the strategy at the beginning of the first session. DOE-SR and SRMC first worked through the technical and estimated costs of the proposal. Once that was completed, the fee was negotiated in a separate session. This kept the focus on current topic with minimal distractions.
4. Ensure the decision makers are in the room during negotiations. DOE-SR and SRMC conducted a highly efficient negotiation because many of the key decision makers were also the negotiators. This bypasses multiple follow-up meetings and allows decisions to be made during the negotiation meeting.
5. Ensure SMEs from both DOE and Contractor are on stand-by if technical questions arise during negotiations.
6. To the extent possible, provide DOE proposal position prior to the negotiation meetings. This allows the Contractor to be fully prepared to respond at the first meeting and maintain momentum of the negotiation.
7. After each negotiation session, prepare and share documentation of the negotiated items and open items. This allows both parties to clearly document the agreements and the remaining items for subsequent meetings. DOE-SR and SRMC shared many emails during negotiations to document and confirm each party’s understanding of the negotiation standpoint to ensure clarity on the path forward.
8. Ensure scheduled times for negotiation meetings are reasonable. Due to the high-stress nature of negotiations, the meeting attendees can become tired and irrational if meeting times are too long. This is not beneficial to either party and can create a negative atmosphere for future meetings.

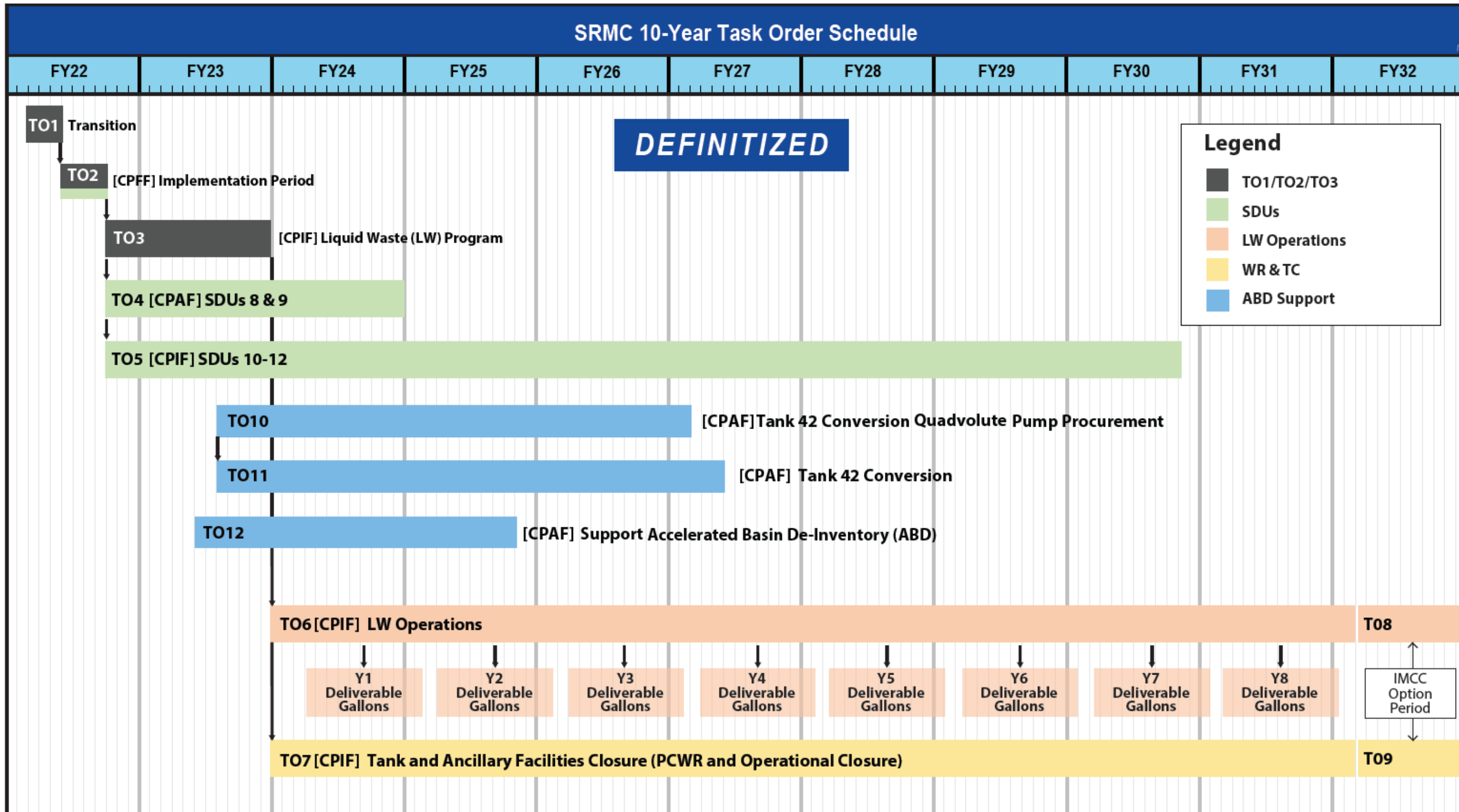
## **TO Award**

1. DOE establishes a TEAMS channel between DOE-SR and DOE-HQ to house the Post-Negotiation Memo documentation that requires DOE-HQ review and approval. In this channel, all reviewers have the ability to provide comments within one document. This allows for quicker comment resolution.
2. Real-time Business Clearance Review is done on the Post-Negotiation documentation which provides for same-day or next-day DOE-HQ approval.

## **Conclusion**

While many lessons learned and best practices have been identified during the TO development and award process, the largest contributor to achieve success is strong partnering between DOE and the Contractor. Strong partnering promotes efficiencies in all phases of the TO process and has led to the successful implementation of ten (10) TOs for the IMCC. A strong partnering environment coupled with the best practices and lessons learned provided above will promote a successful development, review, and award of future TOs at IMCC and other end-state contracts.

**Attachment A**





**Attachment B**

